

THE CIA: Out in the Cold

Even granting that there is no humane way to fire somebody from his job, the two-sentence pink slip that went out two weeks ago to some 200 CIA officers was brutal: "This is to inform you of my intent to recommend to the director of personnel your separation in order to achieve the reduction . . . ordered by the DCI [Director of Central Intelligence] . . ." The memo was signed by William Wells, head of the CIA's clandestine service, but the brusquely impersonal tone belonged to the DCI himself, Adm.



Susan T. McElhinney—Newsweek

The CIA's Turner: Showing the door to 820 spies

Stansfield M. Turner (NEWSWEEK, Sept. 12). By last week, the rebellious muttering in the corridors had reached the spillover point, and one high-ranking officer threw regulations to the winds and aired his grievances to NEWSWEEK.

"To receive the grateful thanks of a grateful government for services rendered—sometimes overseas at great hazard—in the form of a two-sentence message, without any recognition of past performance, was insulting and humiliating," said the defrocked spook, who will be called George Smiley. Spooks are no more frugal than anyone else, and given the esoteric nature of their skills they generally have trouble finding civilian jobs. But even in the case of men who

have only two or three years to go until retirement, the agency insists that the first wave leave by March—and it is trying to hustle them out even faster by promising not to make the pink slip part of their personnel file if they resign immediately. "That implies blackmail, doesn't it?" says Smiley. "That's deeply resented."

Hardware: Like almost all his colleagues, Smiley agrees that the CIA has too many people, too much deadwood. But he questions the decision to make all the cuts—a total of 820 in the next two years—in the 4,500-man operations division while leaving the analysis, technological and administration branches un-

touched. In essence, this means a greater reliance on hardware (satellites and such) and less on spies—a tilt that could turn out badly if the Soviets perfect a killer satellite. And Smiley wonders about the susceptibility of out-of-work spooks to Russian blandishments.

But what really rankles Smiley and his cohorts is the meathook methods of Stan Turner. "He doesn't know what is being eliminated," Smiley says, alluding to a pink-slipped spy who has "better and deeper contacts in the government of Israel today than anybody in the agency. I believe that the admiral is aware only of grades and numbers."

Bloated: "You really heard them crying, haven't you?" Turner retorted when told of Smiley's complaints. "'Often at personal risk!' I bet you there isn't five of them that had personal risk . . . I told them right to their faces . . . there is going to be a higher percentage of cuts in the senior grades than in the junior. What do you do when you've got a bloated agency on your hands?"

Turner does not dispute that he made no attempt to humanize the pink slips, but he insists that he knew the names and skills of the senior people he fired. Faced with pressure to trim up to 1,200 operatives over six to eight years, he collapsed the timetable to two years, on the ground that "I waste the taxpayers' money by keeping people on the payroll I can't justify." But agency sources question whether the economies will be that great, since some of the fired people will catch on with other CIA branches. Others may sue for settlements. One way or another, the already troubled CIA may be in for a long period of bitterness in the clandestine ranks.

—RICHARD BOETH with DAVID C. MARTIN in Washington